

Message Text

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TAGS: EAID, OVIP, PFOR, PINT, LI, US

SUBJECT: PARKER VISIT TO LIBERIA

PASS AID

REF: DAKAR 5945

1. GOL REACTION TO PARKER VISIT HAS SO FAR BEEN VERY GOOD. KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIALS COUNT VISIT A SUCCESS, PROFESS TO SEE A NEW IMPETUS TO U.S.-LIBERIAN RELATIONS, AND BELIEVE VISIT PORTENDS INCREASED LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE. LOCAL PRESS HAS COVERED VISIT FULLY BUT HAS NOT YET EDITORIALIZED. ASSISTANT FONMIN DUNN SAID PRESIDENT PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH IMMEDIATE ACTION, I.E. HARVARD TEAM.

2. GOL MINISTERS HAVE NOT YET COMPLETELY FORMED THEIR OWN IDEAS, AND THEREFORE NO CONSENSUS, ON WHAT AMOUNT OF INCREASED ASSISTANCE THEY CAN EXPECT, BUT EXPECTATIONS UNQUESTIONABLY HAVE BEEN INCREASED. THEY ARE NOW CONCENTRATING ON COMPLETING THEIR OWN FOUR-YEAR PLAN AND ON NEW DEPARTURES TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH TOLBERT'S ENTERING UPON HIS OWN TERM OF OFFICE EARLY IN NEW YEAR. NEVERTHELESS, HARD GOL ANALYSIS OF WHAT WE ARE DOING AND SHOULD DO IN FOLLOW-UP OF PARKER VISIT WILL TAKE PLACE SOON.

3. DEPUTY- AND ASSISTANT-MINISTER LEVEL OFFICIALS ARE
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ALREADY SAYING THEY REALIZE FONMIN DENNIS WAS BOUND TO CALL

PARKER VISIT A SUCCESS SINCE DENNIS' PRESTIGE IS AT STAKE. FROM THESE OFFICIALS WE GET HINTS OF AN AIR OF IMPATIENCE FOR QUICK ACTION. WE HAVE HEARD STATEMENTS SUCH AS, "WHAT DO WE HAVE NOW THAT WE DIDN'T HAVE BEFORE?" ANOTHER ASKED, "AFTER ALL THIS, HOW MUCH?"

4. FROM ATTITUDES OF THESE MEN IT IS CLEAR THAT ACCELERATING THE ARRIVAL OF WHAT WAS ALREADY CONTEMPLATED WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT. NOR WILL SUBSTITUTIONS DO. GOL WANTS A QUANTITATIVE INCREASE IN ACTUAL ASSISTANCE. GOL WILL NOT REGARD STUDIES, ETC., AS SATISFACTORY FOLLOW ON OF KISSINGER-DENNIS AND PARKER-GOL MEETINGS. HARVARD TEAM PROPOSAL, PARTICULARLY, IS SEEN AS EARNEST OF MORE TO COME.

5. SOME OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED POINTED SENSITIVITY TO USING TITLE "STUDY GROUPS", AND INSIST ON REFERRING, FOR EXAMPLE, TO HARVARD GROUP IN TERMS OF "PROGRAM ASSESSMENT TEAM" OR "PROJECT TEAM."

6. WHATEVER WE COME UP WITH WILL BE SEEN AGAINST FORMIDABLE BACKDROP OF THE NEW FOUR-YEAR PLAN, MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF WHICH (I.E. ABOUT \$250 MILLION) THE GOL EXPECTS FROM FOREIGN DONORS. (INCIDENTALLY, GOL REGARDS EEC GROUP'S TENTATIVELY PROPOSED ASSISTANCE OF ABOUT \$25 MILLION OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD AS FAR TOO LITTLE.) MANY GOL EXPERTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT MEETING THE LOCAL COST COMPONENT OF THE PLAN. THEY ARE BEGINNING TO REALIZE THEY MAY HAVE TO RELY MORE ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. THEY ARE THEREFORE HOPEFUL THAT THE PARKER VISIT WILL MEAN A SUBSTANTIAL JUMP IN U.S. ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

7. QUITE APART FROM QUESTION OF HOW MUCH MORE ASSISTANCE MAY BE FORTHCOMING, THERE ARE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF PROCEDURE AND TACTICS. CARE MUST BE TAKEN TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM OF THE VISIT. WE ARE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED TO AVOID POSSIBLE LETDOWN AND DISAPPOINTMENT THAT MIGHT ARISE ON THE GOL SIDE SIMPLY BECAUSE IT TAKES TIME TO GO THROUGH THE BUDGET-CYCLE AND FEASIBILITY-STUDY STAGES. ALTHOUGH IT STILL REMAINS UNQUANTIFIED, THE GOL WILL EXPECT US TO DELIVER SUBSTANTIALLY MORE AND DO SO RELATIVELY QUICKLY.

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